

THE EYES and EARS

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*Photo taken from a video on loan to Grahame Dignam from Ian Ryan.

The 31st January, 1968 marked the commencement of the Tet Offensive.

The Tet Offensive remembered, now, some 46 years after the event by a memorial speech given on the 40th anniversary at the Australian War Memorial...

Talks at the Memorial - “The Tet Offensive”

Special 40th anniversary closing ceremony Tet Offensive, 30th -31st January, 2008 - spoken by Dennis Stockman – Public Programmes Officer at the AWM -

“Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this evening’s closing ceremony, which commemorates the 40th anniversary of one of the most famous campaigns of the Vietnam War – the Tet Offensive. By 1967 the war in Vietnam was deadlocked; neither side had the upper hand. In an attempt to gain the advantage, North Vietnamese commanders began planning a massive offensive that would attack every major city and town in the south. The communists hoped this blow would enable them to win the war, or at least weaken American resolve. They also hoped to provoke a general popular uprising against the South Vietnamese government and the Americans. The offensive was planned to take advantage of the cease-fire at Tet, the Vietnamese festival celebrating the lunar new year, at the end of January 1968.

Fighting began in the morning of 30 January when the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacked a number of population centres. The main offensive came in the early hours of the next day when the communists launched heavy ground, rocket and mortar attacks against most provincial capitals and autonomous cities, and many district capitals and other small towns in South Vietnam. In Saigon Viet Cong “suicide units” attacked prominent buildings, such as the Presidential Palace and the US Embassy.

South Vietnamese and allied forces were at first overwhelmed by the scale of this offensive, but within about six hours they had secured many areas and after four days the communist forces had been driven out of most towns. In Saigon, however, the fighting continued until mid-February. Much of the city was destroyed.

The worst destruction, though, occurred at Hue [*pronounced “hway”*], Vietnam’s former imperial capital. Communist forces held Hue during three weeks of bitter fighting. North Vietnamese soldiers massacred thousands of civilians before being driven out in fighting which left much of the historic city in ruins.

Australian forces were heavily engaged during Tet. On 1 February troops from the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), along with cavalry and artillery support, were given the task of recapturing Ba Ria, the capital of Phuoc Tuy [*“fook twee”*] province, which had been occupied by the Viet Cong. This was the first time that Australians fought in an urban environment in Vietnam, but moving quickly in a spirited attack, the Australians were successful. 3RAR also successfully dealt with a similar Viet Cong attack against Long Dien [*“long zyen”*] a few days later.

The rest of the Australian task force, 2RAR and 7RAR, along with supporting arms, had been earlier deployed to Bien Hoa province during Operation Coburg to cover the north-eastern approaches to the Long Binh–Bien Hoa [*“long bin”–“byen waa”*] air base complex. In the days leading up to the offensive, the Australians fought a series of patrol clashes with the enemy. Fighting intensified during February when an Australian-manned base, Fire Support Base Andersen, came under repeated ground assault. 3RAR also took part in the operation as Andersen was successfully defended. Operation Coburg concluded on 1 March and the task force returned to its base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy province. For the Australians, Tet marked the beginning of a series of actions that were to eventually culminate in the battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral in May and June 1968 during the second communist offensive of “mini-Tet”. Contrary to popular belief, the Tet Offensive was a major military defeat for the communists who suffered devastating losses, especially among the Viet Cong. And there was no popular uprising in South. Tet was, however, a major political victory for the north. It was a turning point in American and allied perceptions of the war, creating the impression that the war could not be won.

In honour of all those Australians who served and died in the Vietnam War, tonight’s closing ceremony will feature a bugler playing the Last Post. The Last Post is included in commemorative services as a final farewell, to signify that the duty of the dead is over and that they can now rest in peace.”

. AN/KPQ-1 RADAR South Vietnam

Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery South Vietnam 1966 - 1970

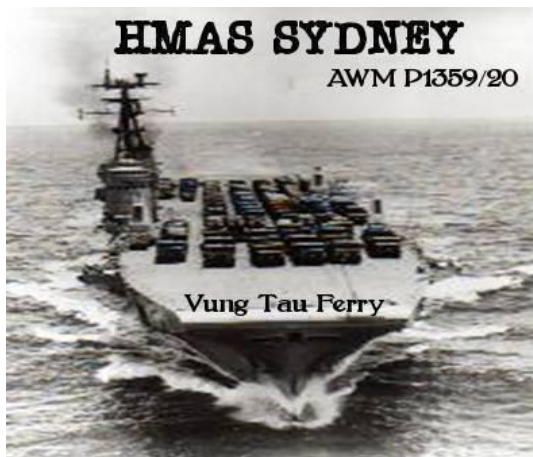
This document records a brief history of the mortar locating radars used by Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery in South Vietnam...the reproduction of which has been granted by its author –

Keith R Ayliffe BEM
Ex 131 Div Loc Bty

5. South Vietnam

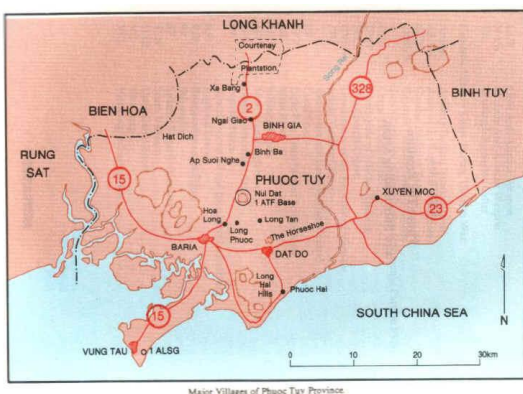
Arrival in SVN

Alpha and Bravo Radars arrived in SVN loaded on their vehicles on the deck of the HMAS SYDNEY with 3 radar operator/drivers, unloading at Vung Tau between 1 and 4 May 1966. The remainder of the advance party flew in by Qantas jet on 4 May, with the main body touching down on the 20 May.



With no acclimatization the radar section conducted 'shake out trials' in the then South Vietnam Police Barracks compound at Vung Tau. Both radar sets were non-operational (not functioning correctly). At about the same time a third radar arrived in crates, it is not clear if this radar arrived on board the HMAS SYDNEY or was flown in. This radar became known as Charlie Radar and was held by Det 131 WKSPS as a slave radar for testing and for spare parts for the two operational radars (this set was also not functioning correctly).

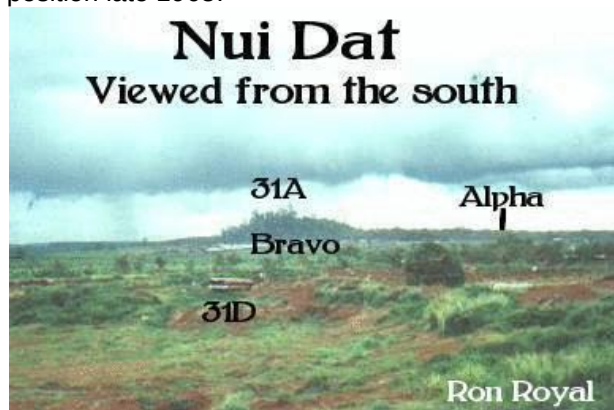
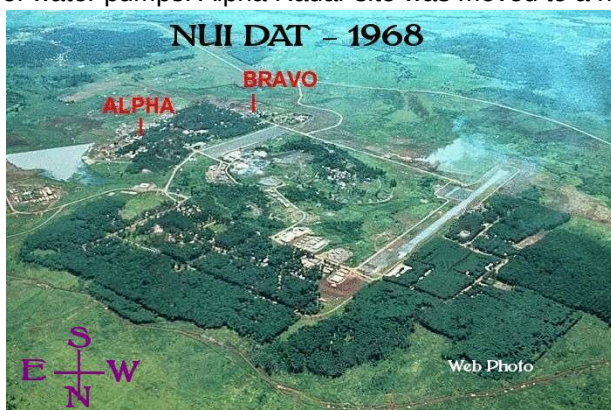
On 22 May both Alpha and Bravo radars, although suffering numerous problems, were classified as operational. On the **6 June 1966** (6/6/66) the radar section moved by road convoy from Vung Tau with 1st Field Regiment RAA as part of the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) to Nui Dat, an area dominated by a small hill in the Phuoc Tuy province (YS 43-67 on Route-2, 60 km east south east of Saigon, 35 km north, north, west of Vung Tau, 8 km north east of Baria and 14 km south, south, west of Ngai Giao.). This would become the home and main base of the radars for the remainder of their tenure in SVN.



**Deployment of radars at Nui Dat in the Phuoc Tuy Province
Alpha Radar**

Alpha Radar was originally deployed with 105 Field Battery (Fd Bty), and after much testing a new location between 161 Fd Bty Royal New Zealand Artillery (RNZA) and the Engineers in the south east sector of the 1 ATF base was selected. This site was approximately 20 metres from the southern perimeter fence. The radar members were housed with the surveyors Det 131 in the Engineer lines, situated in part of an abandoned rubber plantation and rationing was conducted through the engineer messing facilities.

Alpha Radar's command post had been dug below ground and completed by the end of June 1967. An unforeseen problem of flooding in the command post during the wet season, required engineer assistance and the deployment of water pumps. Alpha Radar site was moved to a new position late 1968.



The aerial Photo of Nui Dat (above) shows approximate radar positions (photo taken early 1968)

Bravo Radar

Bravo Radar was originally deployed with 103 Fd Bty on the then main access route. This area, with some adjustments, became the permanent location for Bravo Radar.

Preparation of Bravo Radar site began and with the fresh memory of Alpha Radars' problem with flooding, this became a permanent site built mainly above ground, with a thick concrete roof and heavy sandbagging. Members of Bravo Radar were rationed with 103 Fd Bty and would continued to be rationed with each successive gun bty.

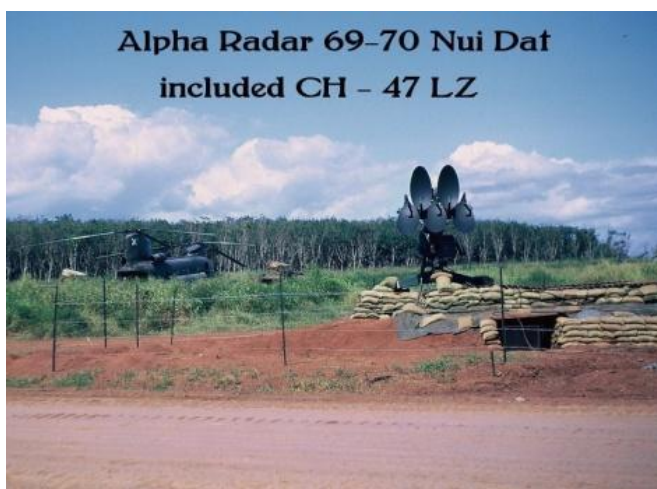


First living area 131
R. Royal 1966



Bravo site 67- 68-69

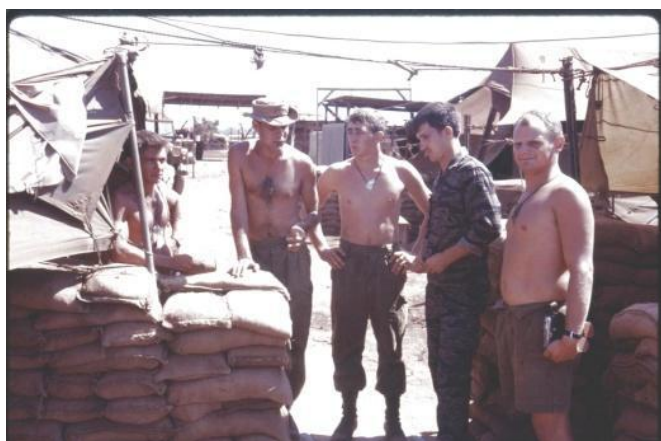
T. Hayes



Alpha Radar 69-70 Nui Dat
included CH - 47 LZ



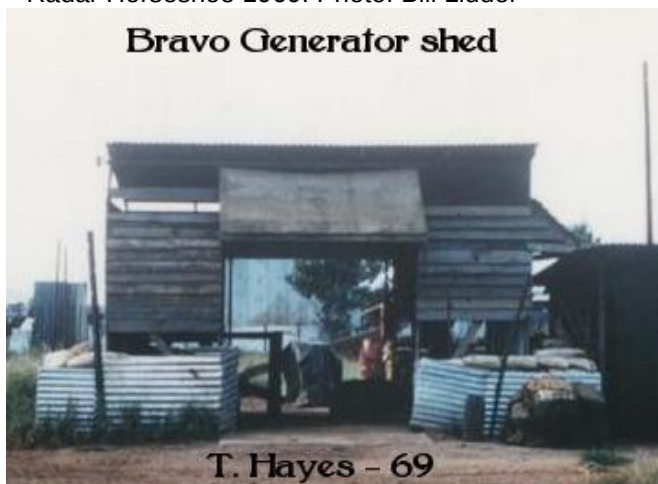
Radar Horseshoe 1969. Photo: Bill Liddel



Bravo lines - Jan 68 From L-R. T. Dodds, K Ayliffe, F. Pepper, I. Kennedy, M. Gordon

Testing in 1967 proved that Bravo Radar site had better aspect angles and gave greater coverage of Nui Dat area. After many tests, the maximum range at which a projectile could be tracked was around 7,000M on all systems which was well below the manufacturers stated range of 10,000M. This was due in part to the fact that the surrounding landscape did not allow for screening or cresting angles which was a technical requirement to enable the radar to reduce "clutter" (Electronic interference) on the screen thereby gaining a clearer view for the operator of the projectiles electronic signature.

To afford greater overall coverage of Nui Dat from enemy mortar attack, a reconnaissance was conducted at the HORSESHOE feature with a view to establishing a third or alternate radar site. The reconnaissance consisted of deploying to the HORSESHOE with a radar selecting a number of possible sites and testing the ability of the radar to track. Interviews indicate this took two days and three sites were tested and —a co-operative infantry mortar section fired for us.

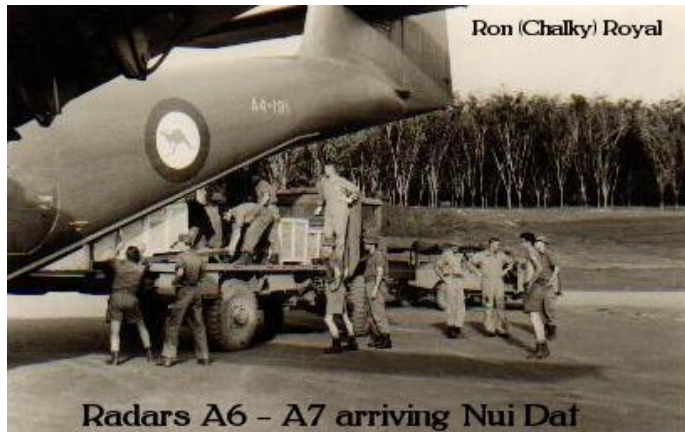


Bravo Generator shed

T. Hayes - 69

(a) Initial Problems

In July with the radars still experiencing consistent problems, representatives of Det 131 (Capt Townley) and Det 131 WKSPS (WO1 Prenter), travelled to Da Nang where the US Marine Corps were believed to operate AN/KPQ-1 radars. On their arrival at 12th Marine Regt Da Nang, they were informed that all seven of the unit's radars had been returned to the United States in June 1966. A Marine Corps report stated that the first AN/KPQ-1 was introduced into Vietnam in December 1964, building up to seven equipments by July 1965, however it was found that never more than four equipments were serviceable at one time. The representatives were informed that the MPQ-4A mortar locating radar was the replacement for the aging AN/KPQ-1. Some spare parts for the AN/KPQ-1 had been left in the country by the Americans and were obtained by Det 131. During the remainder of 1966 and the early part of 1967 many problems confronted the Det 131 WKSPS radar mechanics. Maintaining one (1) radar operational was a real problem. Not only were parts for the radars scarce, the generators were also causing problems. By the end of 1966 a decision was reached requiring the replacement of two radars, with two of the current radars RTA for a complete rebuild as there were no facilities for rebuild in SVN. At the same time a request for new modified generators was made.



In May 1967, two replacement AN/KPQ-1 radar systems arrived directly from USA. They had been flown into Saigon, re-loaded on a Caribou transport plane for the journey to Nui Dat. The equipment was accompanied by an American Officer (believed to be Capt. A McLean) conversant with the electronics of the radar, who would stay until the systems were classified as operational. Also working with the American was RAEME representative from Australia (believed to be Maj Young).

Thanks to Det 131 WKSPS documentation, these systems are identified as A6 and A7. Further from this documentation it is established that Alpha and Charlie Radars were RTA for complete rebuild. From this same source it is now easy to identify Bravo Radar, the last of the original radars, as A12 which became the slave Charlie Radar. By the end of June 1967, for the first time since arrival in SVN, all three systems were operational.

Next month they settle and also get mobile...stay in touch.

Dave Crowther makes a couple of points which he feels need to be added after reading last month's *Eyes & Ears* - "Hi Dicko, I have received Eyes and Ears today. Could you please pass on message to Keith Ayliffe for me or even put in next issue.

In SVN I on Alpha radar. I was promoted to **full Bdr on 2/11/1965** as recorded on my record of service form **af b 103-2 (adapted)**. This was **6.5 months prior** to embarking as part of the advance party for SVN **on 22nd April, 1966**.

I was the radar Bdr on Bravo radar with Fred Lennon at the time and was transferred to Alpha radar approximately late March 1966 to strengthen the manning, as Don Simmons was transferred from Survey section.

I first trained on the ANKPQ-1 when posted to Radar Troop at the School of Artillery under Warwick Hamilton as Troop Commander in May 1964. I also came across an article by Keith on the net about the history of det.131 in SVN. I wish to point out there are several errors regarding the deployment of Alpha radar to Nui Dat. I was the Bdr who flew in the Chinook and set up local defence, awaiting arrival of the section by road. We were deployed on the perimeter outside 103 Bty and between 161 Bty and engineers water point. I was also tasked with all am and pm clearing patrols which also took out the 3 man standing patrol from 103 Bty each am and took out their relief each p.m. myself, lofty Hayes and a few gunners were also seconded onto t.a.o.r. patrols out to the line alpha (4000 mtrs) led by a "Pommie" Sgt (Malayan vet.) from 103 Bty. This took us out to Long Phouc, a village destroyed by 173rd Airborne and B Coy 1 RAR (including one of my brothers) in April/May 1966 just prior to our arrival. It was adjacent Long Tan and inhabitants resettled in Hua Long (say no more). This was not a daily task but was taken over by 6 RAR when they had settled in. I well remember taking 6 suspects in and delivering them to T.F. Intelligence not long prior to Long Tan. I have written previously about our woes regarding flooding of command posts and my disbelief when we were ordered to set up down the hill near the rice paddies. Obviously Maj. Darlington from 1 Fld was only using us up, as Keith has given examples of in his article. My point mainly is that Alpha radar was only ever in that position from initial deployment until my medivac in Nov. 1966. Andrew Opie, Radar Section Commander will verify my status as full Bdr when he was posted to 131 Bty. Keep up the good work. dc."

. 1st Australian Task Force – (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>) The following is the continuation of the account of our involvement in the conflict in South Vietnam...



The site of the battle in 2005.

Moving forward again, D Company continued east. 11 Platoon's rapid follow-up had opened a 500-metre (550 yd) gap with Company Headquarters, while the two lead platoons were now also widely dispersed. 11 Platoon penetrated further into the plantation, widening the gap with 10 Platoon, and they were now more than 300 metres (330 yd) apart. Although 12 Platoon in the rear covered most of the ground bypassed by the forward platoons, the gap was such that their flanking sections had lost sight of each other, while Smith was unable to see them either in the dense vegetation. At that distance the spacing between the Australians was now greater than the maximum effective range of their rifles and machine-guns. Meanwhile, 11 Platoon had moved forward approximately 250 metres (270 yd) from the first engagement. As Smith reached the site of the initial contact the sound of firing continued to the front as Sharp manoeuvred his sections in pursuit of the withdrawing force. Still in extended line, 11 Platoon came across a rubber tapper's hut, and believing sounds emanating from the building were from Viet Cong hiding there, Sharp launched a platoon attack on the position. Yet the Viet Cong had fled prior to the attack, and the assaulting sections swept through the area finding only two grenades. Advancing with three sections abreast—6 Section on the left, 4 Section in the centre and 5 Section on the right—the Australians pushed on through the rubber towards a clearing in the plantation. This formation allowed them to cover a broad front but offered little flank security.

At 16:08, shortly after resuming the advance, 11 Platoon's left flank was suddenly engaged by machine-gun fire from an undetected Viet Cong force, which killed and wounded several men from 6 Section. The Australians went to ground and adopted firing positions, only to be engaged by a second machine-gun firing tracer. The initial firing lasted two to three minutes then stopped, and Sharp then ordered 5 Section to sweep across the front of the platoon from the right. Yet just as they began to move, the Australians came under heavy small-arms fire and rocket propelled grenades from their front and both flanks. They were now pinned down by the weight of fire, and under threat of being overrun the isolated platoon was forced to fight for their lives. Over the next 10 to 15 minutes the Viet Cong engaged 11 Platoon with devastating fire, which put their left flank out of action. However, at that moment a heavy monsoon rain began which reduced visibility to just 50 metres (55 yd) and turned the ground to mud. Assessing the Viet Cong to be in greater strength than previously thought and believing they were preparing for an assault on his position, Sharp called for artillery fire as he moved to bring his exposed section back into line and then gradually draw his platoon into all-round defence. He reported that he was under fire from a force estimated to be platoon-sized. The Australians began the contact believing they were the numerically superior force and would attack the Viet Cong, yet far from clashing with a small force which would attempt to withdraw before being decisively engaged, 11 Platoon had run into the forward troops of a main force regiment. Beginning as an encounter battle, heavy fighting ensued as the advancing battalions of the 275th Regiment and D445 Battalion clashed with D Company, 6 RAR and attempted to encircle and destroy them.

11 Platoon is isolated

Amid the noise of machine-gun and rifle fire and the Viet Cong bugle calls, Stanley quickly brought the 161st Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery into action in an attempt to support the Australian infantry. Yet as he was unable to see them, for safety reasons the initial rounds were directed a distance from 11 Platoon's known location, before "walking" the fire in to between 200 to 300 metres (220 to 330 yd) from their position, aided by D Company's favourable location between the Viet Cong and the gun position at Nui Dat, which allowed the rounds to pass over their heads and fall away from them. Falling beyond 11 Platoon, the rounds exploded amid the Viet Cong as they began to form up for an assault. But with 11 Platoon engaged from its left, front and right, it became clear the Viet Cong force was stronger than a platoon, and was probably at least company-sized. Supported by heavy machine-guns, they subsequently launched a series of assaults against 11 Platoon, only to be held off by small arms and artillery fire. As the fighting continued Stanley realised that a single artillery battery would be insufficient, and at 16:19 he requested a regimental fire mission, using all 24 guns of the 1st Field Regiment, RAA. The Viet Cong continued their assault regardless, surging around the flanks of 11 Platoon. The Australians responded with controlled small arms fire, picking off a number of Viet Cong soldiers as the rain and artillery continued to fall around them. After making the required corrections Stanley requested another regimental fire mission at 16:22, yet still unable to see the rounds land he had to work entirely from radio communications with 11 Platoon, adjusting the fire over an area of 200 metres (220 yd) using just a map.



New Zealand gunners carry out a fire mission.

Less than twenty minutes after the initial contact more than a third of 11 Platoon had been killed or wounded. Several 60 mm light mortar rounds were subsequently fired towards the D Company position and although they landed to the east they further separated the remainder of the company from 11 Platoon, putting the main body behind a slight rise. At 16:26 Smith reported to Townsend that D Company was facing a force of company-size and that they were using mortars, urgently called for artillery support. Shortly afterwards Sharp was shot and killed after he raised himself to observe the fall of shot. With the platoon commander dead, Buick took charge of 11 Platoon, directing the artillery through Stanley. Unable to extricate itself, 11 Platoon was almost surrounded as the Viet Cong continued to assault their position. Suffering heavy casualties and running short of ammunition, Buick desperately radioed for assistance. Soon after the aerial of the platoon's radio was shot away and communications were lost. Meanwhile, Smith requested aerial fire support from armed CH-47 Chinooks or an air-strike to deal with the mortars. In response, Stanley organised counter-battery fire from the American 155 mm self-propelled howitzers at Nui Dat, which appeared to silence them. These mortars were not the 82 mm variants that had bombarded Nui Dat on 16/17 August and although no further mortar fire was reported at the time, they may have fired at B Company later in the battle. Meanwhile, 10 Platoon was approximately 200 metres (220 yd) to the north and Smith ordered it to move up on the left of 11 Platoon to try to relieve pressure on them and allow a withdrawal back to the company defensive position. Dropping their packs, Kendall's platoon wheeled to the south-east in extended line, advancing towards 11 Platoon. As they came over a small rise, through the rain they observed a regular Viet Cong platoon of 30 to 40 men advancing south, firing on 11 Platoon as they attempted to outflank them. Advancing to close range before dropping to their knees to adopt firing positions, 10 Platoon engaged them from the rear, hitting a large number and breaking up the attack. As the surviving Viet Cong withdrew, Kendall pushed on. Yet shortly after 10 Platoon was also heavily engaged on three sides from a heavy machine-gun firing tracer from the high ground of the Nui Dat 2 feature 400 metres (440 yd) to their left, wounding the signaller and damaging the radio and putting it out of action. Now also without communications, and still 100 to 150 metres (110 to 160 yd) from 11 Platoon, 10 Platoon moved into a defensive position, fighting hard to hold on. Finally a runner arrived from Company Headquarters with a replacement radio, having moved 200 to 300 metres (220 to 330 yd) through heavy fire as he attempted to locate the platoon, killing two Viet Cong with his Owen gun on the way. With the wounded starting to arrive back at Smith's position and communications with 10 Platoon restored, he ordered Kendall to pull back under cover of the artillery. 10 Platoon was ultimately forced back to its start point.

Reaction at Nui Dat

It appeared the Viet Cong would shortly overrun D Company if they were not soon reinforced. Yet, with 1 ATF lacking sufficient forces to maintain a dedicated reserve at Nui Dat, no suitable quick reaction force was prepared to deploy at short notice. Consequently it would take several hours to organise a relief force. Although essentially a sub-unit battle fought by a rifle company supported by artillery and co-ordinated by Townsend from the 6 RAR command post at Nui Dat, Jackson was concerned. Not only was D Company in trouble, but the entire force might be under threat, while the additional resources available to the task force might be required. As a result he remained in constant contact with Townsend, although ultimate control remained with the latter. Viet Cong jamming on the Battalion Command net forced them to switch frequencies to communicate with D Company, while with such a capability rarely found below divisional-level, they were likely more heavily outnumbered than first thought. At 16:30 Townsend issued a warning order to A Company to prepare to reinforce them, despite themselves only having returned from a three-day patrol an hour prior. Intending to lead the company out himself and take command of the battle, 3 Troop, 1st APC Squadron under Lieutenant Adrian Roberts was also warned to be ready to lift the relief force. American ground attack aircraft at Bien Hoa were also placed on alert by Headquarters 1 ATF. Meanwhile, on hearing the sounds of the fighting while returning to Nui Dat, B Company halted 2,300 metres (2,500 yd) short of the base and was ordered to rejoin D Company. Apparently under close observation from the Viet Cong, they were engaged by two 60 mm mortars as they turned around, but suffered no casualties.

Requiring the task force commander's permission to send out the relief force and to accompany it, Townsend telephoned Jackson. Jackson was concerned for the safety of the entire force and was initially reluctant to authorise the dispatch of the relief force should it weaken the position at Nui Dat. He was unsure of the size of the Viet Cong facing D Company, although from Smith's reports it appeared to be at least a regular battalion. Meanwhile, intelligence suggested it was likely part of the 275th Regiment, although the locations of the remaining two battalions of the regiment were unknown, as were those of D445 Battalion. The location of the 274th Regiment was equally unclear.

Although radio direction finding suggested it may have been near Phuoc Tuy's northern border, three weeks earlier it had been reported close to the western side of the Australian TAOR, while one of its battalions had been involved in an attack on Duc My in the south-west of the province on 11 August. Consequently, Jackson reasoned that if the battle unfolding near Long Tan was the opening phase of an attack on Nui Dat the main assault was still to come, and he would require the bulk of his forces to defend the task force base. He considered the commitment of A Company would tie up the bulk of 6 RAR and the artillery. Yet Townsend believed Nui Dat's defences to be sufficient to deter such an attack, even if they remained incomplete, while the strategic reserve held by US II FFV could also be enacted if required. Ultimately Jackson gave his in-principle support to the plan; however, he would not release the relief force until he thought it warranted.

Fighting continues

By 16:50 it was apparent to Smith that he was facing a force of at least battalion-strength. Yet with his two forward platoons still separated and unable to support each other, D Company was badly positioned for a defensive battle. 10 Platoon had been prevented from engaging the Viet Cong attacking 11 Platoon, and was unable to support its withdrawal as a result. Meanwhile, 11 Platoon had gone to ground in extended line following the initial contact, leaving its flanks vulnerable, while its aggressive push forward prior to the engagement had also complicated the application of artillery support, which had to be switched to support each platoon as required rather than allowing it to be concentrated. Unable to see either platoon, the D Company artillery forward observer had been unsure of 11 Platoon's exact position, further delaying the process. As a consequence 10 and 11 Platoons were each forced to fight their own battles, and despite the weight of the indirect fire increasingly becoming available to support the Australian infantry, the Viet Cong were able to apply superior fire power as they tried to isolate and attack each platoon in turn. To retrieve the situation Smith planned to pull his company into an all-round defensive position to enable his platoons to support each other and fight a co-ordinated battle and care for the wounded until a relief force could arrive to assist. Seemingly intent on attacking Nui Dat, the Viet Cong moved to overrun the beleaguered force, but the dispersal of the Australian platoons made it difficult for them to find D Company's flanks and roll them up, and may have led the Viet Cong commander to assess that he was facing a much larger Australian force.

More to follow next month...

. February in SVN...

2 February	1968	Baria recaptured	The <u>3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment</u> , recaptured Baria after the Tet offensive. The effects of the Tet Offensive were felt most acutely by the Australians when the Viet Cong attacked targets around Phuoc Tuy's provincial capital, Baria. The attacks were repulsed with few Australian casualties, though the Communists suffered heavy losses.
23 February	1967	<u>Major P.J. Badcoe, VC</u>	Major P.J. Badcoe, Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, originally of Adelaide, South Australia, leads an attack against Viet Cong troops - it was the first of three acts of bravery between February and April 1967 for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross.
24 February	1971	Captain J.J. Smith, MC and Bar	Captain J.J. Smith, Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, performs the action for which he is awarded a Bar to his Military Cross in July 1971.
29 February	1972	HMAS Sydney arrives at Vung Tau	On this voyage Sydney embarked 457 soldiers. HMAS Sydney made 21 voyages to Vietnam during the war.

Ed on sourcing and entering the above thought the following February anniversary was worth reflecting on...

16 February	1942	Banka Island massacre	22 members of the Australian Army Nursing Service and other survivors of the sinking of the SS Vyner Brooke massacred on Banka Island. The only survivor from this party of Australian nurses was Sister Vivian Bullwinkel. The following link shows a little more of the extraordinarily brave person - http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/fiftyaustralians/5.asp
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. The late Fred Lennon.....collection series...



1966 Fred filling sandbags in Vietnam...Amazing he found time for a 'cuppa and not a Gunner to be seen!

. Ian Finlay...the following we have branded - “Aladdin’s Cave” – “Fin” has opened a really fascinating archive and he needs help with names – each of the photos tells its own story – this is a continuing series...



Geoff Flett & his “famous” Cortina



Now who the hell are these blokes and where are they? Ok it's Aus, and one of them can't help himself from “tinkering with Cortinas-cars!

. Ernie Newbold was right onto this photo from last month –
“G'day Paul,

I've been having a second look through the December E&Es, this time I've enlarged some of the old B&W photos to have a better look at them. The one with the VW Beetle was of particular interest, the soldier standing by the driver's side looks very much like Peter “Pappy” Gault and he did own a Beetle at that time, from memory it was a green one. Looking at the Palm trees and the buildings in the background I suspect that it could have been taken at Victoria Barracks when we were stationed there on a guard duty roster. The Battle Dress uniforms indicate that this could be the case too.

It will be interesting to see if anyone can shed any further light on the subject.
Regards, Ernie.

p.s. I've no idea who the other Gunner could be, haven't seen him for ages.” – **Ed** – yeah right Ernie!



..then this follows on...

Pete "Pappy" Gault – sent this reply after reading last month's *Eyes & Ears* with regards to a photo of two "suspects" and a VW back at North Head – "Hi Dicko - All good up here in sunny Queensland. Still getting chemo but am alive & grateful. I have just read the latest *E&E*'s the photo of the two good looking roosters alongside the flash VW - one of them is me, "Pappy" Gault – I'm on the driver's side. I don't know who the other bloke is. It looks like the photo was taken at North Head - so we were probably going down to Manly for a milkshake. Regards "Pappy" - Keep up the good work all you journos especially "Uncle" Ernie."

Ed – Now this is interesting – **Ernie Newbold** thinks the photo was taken at Victoria Barracks – I've said this before, but it could also be relevant here – 'Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn."

. **Kevin Browning** sent in the following email where the Subject line read: **Synchronised Sunshots** which in itself is not something someone with a lisp can say 11 times in quick succession. However, he does give layman explanations to some of the tech jargon, which is decent of him! It looks as though he's seeking some serious help from the Surveyor group amongst us – read on...

"Hi Paul,

Hope you had a Merry Christmas to be followed by a great 2014.

Reason I am writing is an attempt to get the grey matter working in the Locators, especially the **Surveyors**.

One of the essentials they had to provide was accurate orientation and the manuals told us this could be achieved by computation when the coordinates (that is grid reference for the non techs) of two points were known, astronomical observation of the sun or stars, or from a trig point or bearing picket card.

In Vietnam option one was not readily possible because someone had planted trees to obscure visibility, option 2 was possible in the dry season but use of the stars was avoided due to the need to use lights so you could see the booking sheet as the stars tended to come out when it was dark. Trig points were available in limited numbers and generally wouldn't provide sight into the gun area. Bearing pickets were like trig points but often were not accessible after operations.

So much for the manual.

Someone then came up with logical and practical to condition alternatives. In the wet season it was difficult to see the sun or stars, or anything else for that matter. The gun battery had a tubular compass on their director that they used for initial orientation. Not real accurate in survey terms but better than the standard compass shot. Our surveyors went one up on this method and used a tubular compass on a theodolite. They would follow the floating compass needle until it stopped taking six readings to the east of north and six readings from the west of north. These readings would be averaged and the result passed to the guns/radar.

Then came the gyroscopic orientor PIM which provided very accurate orientation and was extremely useful in the wet season and therefore did away with the need for the tubular compass method. Another method used was synchronized sun observations. An observer at a point where the orientation was known, such as trig points or bearing pickets would observe the sun at the exact moment another station at the gun area observed the sun. It was then possible to determine the bearing at the gun position. This method was both accurate and very quick and the only limitation was the need to have the sun visible.

My question is does anyone know when the synchronised observation was introduced in Vietnam, and by whom. A process of elimination might be possible to at least narrow down the period. Do any of the original detachment surveyors remember using this method? If not how about the 1967 group. I know when I arrived in late 68 Clive Dries instructed me on the method as it hadn't been taught in Australia. Any help on this would be greatly appreciated as we try to record the development of the processes used in Vietnam. Any anecdotes would also be welcome.

Regards, Kevin"

Ed - Gee I'm glad the "gyroscopic orientor PIM" came along – but could it make a decent coffee?

. **Ernie Newbold** - Returned Nashos ex NSW Rural Bank

"G'day Paul,

In last Saturday's Sydney Morning Herald there was a notice regarding former employees of the N.S.W. Rural Bank who served overseas as National Servicemen during the 60s and 70s. Perhaps you could put it in the January edition of the *Es & Es* in case we have anyone of interest who answers the description.

Regards, Ernie."

Ernie in the latest Assoc's Hats, floppy, broad brimmed – great for sun protection.



Rural Bank of NSW: Have almost completed a full list of blokes called up for National Service who worked for the Rural Bank of NSW in the 1960s and 1970s. Trying to confirm those who saw overseas service. Contact Richard, richyvon47@hotmail.com or 02 6792 3114.

. **Mick Habben** sent in a typical photo of a **Mick Campbell** pose, but what is interesting is the missing moustache – **Ed** has no recollection of that...

“Hi Dicko

Just found a photo of Mick Campbell. May not be of any use but nevertheless.....

And, I should become a financial member. Please convey details as to how I can do that.

Cheers

Mick Habben”



. **Derek Hinde** sent the following photo in from the AWM website...



“The photo shows me on left and Alan Robb on right...taken on OP Capital in 1968. Regards Derek Hinde 2787403.SVN 68-69.”

Details of the above photo...

AWM archives - **Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam. 1968-12. Gunner Derek Hinde of Cheltenham, NSW (left), examines a captured Russian made 7.62mm light machine gun while Lance Bombardier Alan Robb of Cadoux, WA, who is wearing zinc cream on his nose and bottom lip, ties an identification tag to the weapon. Both are members of the 131st Divisional Locating Battery, one of the units involved in Operation Capital, a reconnaissance in force in the norther areas of Phuoc Tuy Province.**

AWM – ID number Com/68/1039/VN Photographer Combe, David Reginald

. **David Troedel** sent the following link in and it's REALLY worth having a look at as it is something that we may have heard of but never really knew much or anything about. It's a great photographic part of history...

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/enemyathome/holsworthy-internment-camp/>



. **20STA enjoys Royal Patronage!** – **Grahame Dignam** – “We need to tread carefully here - you never know when a corgi will round the corner!”

Grahame in the latest Assoc's cap



Royal Patronage - 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery - Pages in category "Australian army units with royal patronage"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Australian_army_units_with_royal_patronage

. **John Vitkovsky** owns something really special for us to have a look at and hopefully go and visit.

Welcome!

Come and enjoy a peaceful retreat at the **Southern Grampians Wilderness Resort** located on the Western gateway to the Grampians. The Resort offers comfortable facilities, warm hospitality and a memorable environmental experience. There are five 4 and a half Star Luxury Log Cottages, widely separated for privacy, nestled in amongst 230 acres of secluded virgin bushland - away from the crowds! Surrounded by State forest, and with access to Rocklands Reservoir, this exclusive eco resort also boasts a first-class licensed restaurant, bar and games room.



There are abundant scenic locations nearby for day trips - plenty of opportunities for bushwalking, boating, fishing, mountain-bike riding and many off-site 4WD tracks. For the nature lover, birds and wildlife are plentiful. There is also a nearby 18 hole golf course.

The following is the link to the website – it's really worth a look at - www.grampiansresort.com.au

. **Kim McGrath**

Subject: **CONFIRMATION - THE AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION 2014 NATIONAL GUNNER DINNER - WILL PROCEED**

“131 LOCATORS ASSOCIATION

Hi Grahame,

I write to provide you with an update on the proposed Australian Artillery Association's 2014 National Gunner Dinner.

It is with pleasure that I advise you the dinner will proceed as planned.

As previously stated, **the event will be held on**
Saturday 23rd August 2014

at The Event Centre located at 20 Minchinton Street, Caloundra QLD 4551.

In brief the event will consist of the following:

- 3 hour dedicated military concert by the Sunshine Coast Symphony Orchestra commencing at 1:30pm for 2:00pm to 5:00pm
- The Australian Artillery Association 2014 National Gunner Dinner which consists of a 3 course dinner inclusive of a 3 hour drinks package followed by Port. Included in the dinner will be a quartet or quintet providing light background dinner music. The dinner will commence at 6:30pm for 7:00 pm and will conclude at 12:00 midnight.

Full details of the dinner inclusive of the above information can be found on our website at URL:

www.australianartilleryassociation.com then follow the link to the webpage dedicated to the dinner. To date we have a total of 320 registered attendees from all states and territories of Australia in addition to attendees registering from Scotland, Thailand, New Zealand and the USA. We are hopeful of achieving between 400 & 500 in attendance on the day.

Once again we cordially extend an invitation to all members of your Association.

Also in attendance will be Lieutenant General Ash Power, AO, CSC the current Chief of Joint Operations and Major General Tim Ford AO (Retd) Chairman Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company.

Should you have any questions in relation to the Australian Artillery Association's 2014 National Gunner Dinner please do not hesitate to contact me via return email or on mobile: 0417 422 427 It would be greatly appreciated if you would disseminate this information to your membership.

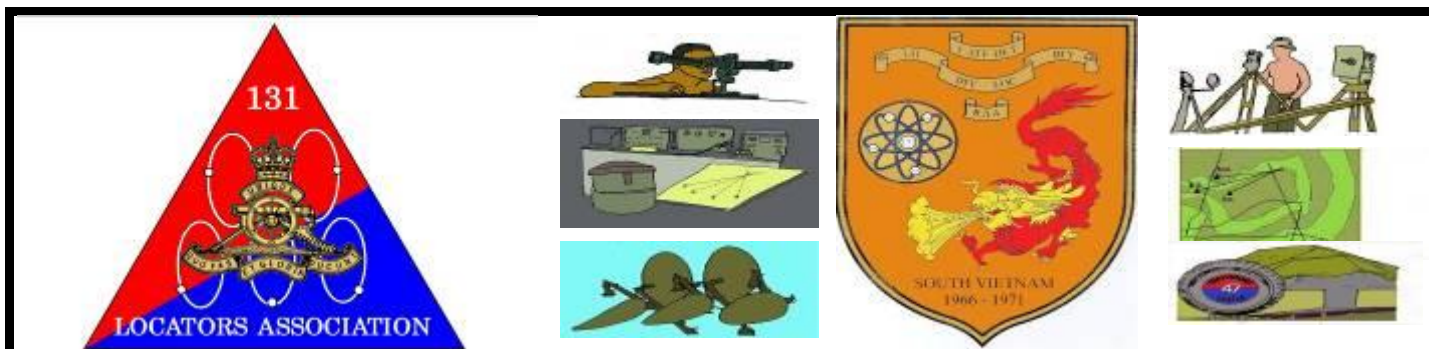
Yours sincerely,

Kim I. McGrath

President

Australian Artillery Association”





Committee members:
President – Allen Morley, **Vice President** – Bert Blink, **Treasurer/Secretary** – Grahame Dignam,
Public Officer – Victor Danko, **Webmaster** – Bob Billiards, **Research Officer** – Ernie Newbold,
Designs and Development Officer – Nick Proskurin, **Eyes & Ears Editor** – Paul Dickson
General members – Ian Amos, Ged Carroll George Lane.
Regional Representatives: **ACT** – Bert Blink, **Qld** – Terry Erbs, **SA** - Geoff Blackwell,
Vic (Melb) – Alan Adams, **WA** - Barry Guzder
<http://www.131locators.org.au>

Welcome – The Association has great pleasure in welcoming **Paul Hobson and Mick Habben** to the Association fold.

. Upcoming Events Calender –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Thursday 20/02/2014 at 1100hrs

Venue: Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, 26 Humphries Rd., Canley Heights for directions - <http://www.canleyheightsrsl.com.au/contact-us/> You're all welcome.

Presidential perambulations

The end of January 2014 is here already. How did that happen?

There were high temperatures here in Australia together with bushfires nationwide, snow and ice and blizzards in the USA courtesy of a 'polar vortex' and flooding rain in England. A Russian ship carrying an Australian scientific group to Antarctica, whose stated aim was to demonstrate thinning of the icecap, was frozen in and the scientists had to be rescued by helicopter after two icebreakers failed to free the ship. The rescue was at a cost of millions to the Australian taxpayer. I bet that an interesting scientific paper should come out of that conundrum. The world has gone crazy.

Meanwhile, back at 131 Locators Association, life goes on fairly normally. Our membership is growing slowly. It is a delight to discover one of the 131 family and to reconnect, where that is wanted. Some choose to remain connected, and in those cases their wish is accepted with regret.

One of the association's aims is to maintain contact with as many from 131 Div Loc Battery, including the Detachment. In doing so we are not kidding ourselves that we can be some sort of replacement for DVA. However, where we can help we attempt to do what we can do practically. One of our major projects in development is to identify areas where we can assist others, not necessarily 131ers. Maybe that could be the next generation. Or maybe soldiers returning from Afghanistan.

If readers of *Eyes & Ears* have any ideas/suggestions/recommendations please let us know of these. Drop me an e-mail to president@131locators.org.au to help our planning process.

Regards and best wishes to all for 2014.

Allen Morley"

Allen seen wearing the "new" Assoc bucket hat



. web Performance...

If you've got more photos that you want added, just send them to: - Paul Dickson – web Photos three-zero@hotmail.com – **BUT DON'T FORGET TO ADD TITLES/NAMES ETC.**

Ed – just thought I'd add a photo of our webmaster, Bob Billiards, in his new Assoc hats floppy broad brimmed – looks cool and shady!



. Birthdays in the Battery...February –

Now let's pick the youngster out for the Month – **Terrence McManis** - Happy 63rd wherever you are have a good one? Plus **Geoff Jebb** comes in at a good 84 on the 23rd.



Here's what **Greg Green** looked like in Tianjara,1967.

February	Name	Regt No	YOB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	JIM MENZ	38838	1946	10 10 1967	18 02 1968	† 18.02.68 KIA
2	ROGER McDONNELL	2784019	1945	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
3	ROBERT GIBSON	2787361	1947	29 01 1968	07 02 1969	
3	EDWARD HENSON	2788331	1947	16 09 1968	27 08 1969	
4	OLAF ASMANIS	3796272	1947	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	
5	IAN YERBURY Capt.	43129	1944	{05 05 1967	05 03 1968	131 † 1989
	" "			{05 02 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd REGT
5	RICHARD FLAVELL	3791902	1945	23 09 1968	04 06 1969	
5	GEORGE CLARK	2412252	1947	{20 01 1969	21 01 1970	
	" "			{09 01 1967	27 09 1967	1 ARU/131
5	STEPHEN HALL	4720327	1948	27 11 1969	13 08 1970	
6	MICK HABBEN	3788307	1945	05 05 1967	20 12 1967	
7	LINDSAY BLACK Sgt.	213794	1940	30 04 1970	04 08 1970	131 † 2009
	" "			05 08 1970	12 03 1971	4 Fd REGT
8	ROBERT RAMSAY	2788108	1947	16 09 1968	27 08 1969	
8	IAN CAMPBELL	3798378	1949	10 02 1971	07 06 1971	131
	" "			07 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd REGT
9	GEOFF WOOD	2783898	1945	04 05 1967	13 12 1967	† 26.04.07
9	CHRIS ARMISHAW	2781291	1945	04 05 1966	27 10 1966	† 10.02.70
9	GARY WORRALL	43796	1945	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
9	NEVILLE HASTINGS	1730813	1945	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
10	ERIC WILLIAMS	1735449	1948	13 02 1970	04 02 1971	
10	GRAHAME SMITH	2792939	1947	30 05 1970	26 05 1971	
11	DENNIS MALLOY	3795057	1948	22 07 1969	16 07 1970	
12	ROSS GUNNELL	5714499	1945	05 05 1967	27 09 1967	
12	LEIGH BAKER	3789657	1945	10 06 1967	23 04 1968	
12	ANTHONY SHELDRAKE	5716358	1948	04 11 1969	13 08 1970	
14	ERNEST NEWBOLD	2783771	1945	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
14	KEVIN HEENAN	3794777	1948	27 11 1969	13 08 1970	
14	MARCUS ROBINSON	2791229	1948	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	
16	DAMIAN McMANUS	3787689	1945	20 05 1966	29 05 1967	
16	LUIGI LANERA	3795443	1947	25 11 1969	12 11 1970	RAEME
16	TERENCE HUNT	3792120	1947	19 02 1968	21 02 1969	
17	ADRIAN SPENCER	3794631	1948	28 10 1969	13 08 1970	
18	TERRENCE McMANIS	44277	1950	30 05 1970	09 10 1970	
21	WILLIS (BILL) WIGHT 2Lt.	39136	1945	12 01 1967	23 04 1968	
23	GEOFFREY JEBB WO2	24660	1930	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	
23	GRAEME SALTER	3792618	1947	16 09 1968	27 08 1969	
23	GRAEME JENNION	3796241	1947	24 03 1970	04 03 1971	
24	GREG GREEN	2784565	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
24	ALBERT JACKA	39856	1950	16 12 1969	11 03 1971	AACC
27	DONALD PERRY WO2	38675	1936	15 04 1970	19 11 1970	
28	NORBERT KROLL	218285	1948	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	

28	BRIAN MITCHELL	2412582	1949	14 03 1968	26 03 1969	
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What the colours above are supposed to mean - **red** is for Association Members, **yellow** is for Affiliate Members, **blue** is for Associates (Honorary), white is for blokes we still need to contact and **black background** signifies Locators, who we are aware of, are no longer with us.

Ed – 13 blokes not highlighted isn't a bad result – but we must be able to find a few more!

. Locator Profiles – we've received **122** and we've sent out **122**. **Ed** – the flow has ceased!!

Found...

. Allan Bath sent in the following email after a "chance" meeting and after the penny dropped **Ed** realised that we had **Vale'd Kevin** and now to the wonders of modern 21st Century he has been **Un-Vale'd** –

Welcome back to the group Kevin!

– "G'day Paul,

Had a chance meeting with a fellow in the shop the other day - Kevin Thornton who said he was in 131 and had served OS. He was formally dressed and wearing medals so I don't think there is any doubt about his integrity. Said he had lost all contact with everyone so I have included his email address and you may be able to make contact with him.

All the best to you and your family for a merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year.

I don't know a lot of the names that arise as I was transferred out of 131 when I left Aus, but keep the emails coming.

They certainly are good reading.

Regards Allan Bath"

Have a look at the Association's web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au> – you might find some lost mates or get in touch with us and see if we can for you.

.Vale –

In memory –

Davies, John William Sgt 29351 Svn 1966-67 DOB 26.09.37 DOD 00.00.04

May they rest in peace



131 Locators Association is always on the lookout for new financial members. With the establishment of the web site we continue to be burdened with the ongoing cost of maintenance etc and we need to be able to support this effort equally.

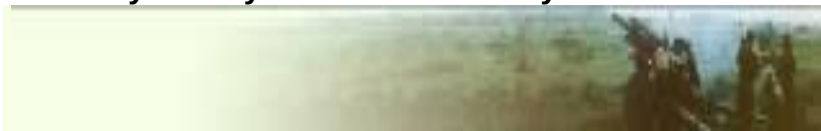
So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the *Eyes & Ears* regularly you could bite the bullet and email **Grahame Dignam**: sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join.

Memberships are available for 1 or 5 years. Hope we hear from you?

Web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au/131locators/>

. Other related sites...

. Artillery Surveyors 131 Div Loc Bty...



ARTILLERY SURVEYORS 131 DIV LOC BTY

"Elements of 131 came wandering in from the bush"

(A quote whose origins are lost, yet the sentiments expressed will not be lost on many who served with 131 Div Loc Bty SVN.)

This website seeks to make contact with the Artillery Surveyors of 131 Div Loc Bty. We welcome your relevant contributions of photos, insights and observances so we might endeavour to expand

131 Artillery Surveying Vietnam record, beyond this window. Please use the [contacts page](#) for details:

<http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/> <http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/operations/coburg.html>

. Locating , Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield

...notes taken from the LS & TAA website – Committee meetings are held regularly with most held at Paddington RSL commencing at 11.15am.

The next **Committee Meeting** will be held on **9 March 2014** at Paddington RSL. Members are cordially invited to attend.

Details of scheduled Committee meetings will be available in the next issue of the *Associations Newsletter LOCREP*.



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



www.artilleryhistory.org



Website link - <http://www.vvaa.org.au/>



Website link - <http://www.dva.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx>

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

The Dept of Veteran's Affairs has launched a new mental health initiative to assist veteran's experiencing the affects of mental illness and their families. Providing information and fact sheets about understanding mental illness, links and contact information for accessing support, and online resources for health professionals, this website focuses on helping veterans identify early warning signs of mental illness to effectively manage their mental illness and seek treatment. For more info or to access, please visit www.at-ease.dva.gov.au

. 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...

Bill Taggart sent his in after the communications with Ernie Newbold and Bob Billiards re: "Patches" in last month's *Eyes & Ears*

"I got this from one of our 69-70 guys, Dan O'Brien.

Bill

Email... artillery_83rd@yahoo.com

1/83rd Website link... http://83rd_artillery.home.comcast.net/"

“Sent: Sunday, December 22, 2013 6:06 PM

Subject: Patches

Patches relocated to Westover AFB MA. in the mid 1970's. I joined the USAF reserve in 1978 as an air cargo specialist. I loaded C-130's and C-123's The 439 airlift wing and 905th Aerial Port Flight was C-130's. The C-123's [including PATCHES] [901st Aerial Port Flight] was in the 337th airlift wing. Most of our loads were for parachute airdrops. I was in the aerial delivery section that packed chutes and rigged loads for airdrop. About 1982, the C-123's were taken from the inventory and a Westover crew, all my friends, flew PATCHES to Wright Patterson AFB Museum in Dayton Ohio. The guys flew back to our base on a C-130. Some of them were vomiting and very sick on the trip to Dayton. CMS [E-9] Ron Plouff who was a loadmaster on Patches married MSG Karen Jablonski. Ron died of cancer [Agent Orange related] before he could retire from the USAF reserves. I served with both of them for many years. A former PATCHES pilot recently won a case against the Air Force on AO related symptoms. There is a website on Westover's C-123's with a picture [attached] of all the nurses that served as Air Medical Evac. The USAF had denied any connection to Patches and the flight crews in the reserves. I visited Wright Patt years later to see Patches all silver instead of the camo paint job. It is the only aircraft totally sealed for no entry during OPEN COCKPIT DAY. Attached picture is a C-130 airdrop looking off the ramp from inside. Another C-130 follows close behind. Our Aussie Mates can search some of these numbered units of USAF reserve and may find out more info. Hope this info helps.

Dan

A/1/83rd Arty 69

905th APF Aerial Delivery Sect 78-86 C-130-C-123

208th HH transportation CH-54B Skycrane

G-104th AVN REGT CH-47 Chinook 86-96 [104th just returned from Afghanistan 4th tour]”



Dedicated to the men of the 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery who served in Vietnam from 1966-1971. We left Fort Sill in October 1966 for Vietnam. We originally were at Bear Cat, Nui Dat and Xuan Loc. We later were in many other locations in Vietnam. We also welcome our Australian and New Zealand Allies to whom we owe so much.

It is also dedicated to those members of the 1/83rd who did not return. We will never forget their sacrifice. Website: http://83rd_artillery.home.comcast.net/~83rd_artillery/

Editor contact email: three-zero@hotmail.com **Ed – Paul ‘Dicko’ Dickson**

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